

*Works to protect children and seniors from poor air quality and to preserve voluntary programs to reduce pollution*

*April 7, 2011*

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) offered two amendments on the floor of the House of Representatives in the last two days aimed at combating initiatives to lower air quality and harm the environment. Language authored by Rep. McNerney would amend H.R. 910, legislation offered by House Republicans that prohibits the EPA from taking action to control greenhouse gas emissions.

“I’m deeply concerned by this ‘Dirty Air Act’ because of the negative effect it will have on American families,” said Rep. McNerney. “Every credible expert agrees that climate change is happening, and that it has harmful consequences. Stopping efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is dangerous and hurts our economic position at home and abroad.”

The first of Congressman McNerney’s amendments, which passed with bipartisan support, ensures that voluntary programs that control climate change are exempt from the bill’s prohibitions. An example of such an initiative is the SmartWay program, which allows for collaboration between the federal government and transportation sector companies that want to do their part to reduce pollution.

“My amendment is a pro-environment, pro-consumer, and pro-business proposal to make sure that our country can continue to administer voluntary programs to reduce pollution, improve public health, and address climate change,” said Rep. McNerney. “It will ensure that companies that want to do the right thing and help reduce pollution can continue to do so.”

The second of Congressman McNerney’s amendments helps guarantee that America’s seniors

and children – particularly children with asthma and lung diseases – are protected from the country's biggest polluters. The amendment helps improve air quality by protecting seniors and children from polluters that emit 75,000 tons or more of carbon air pollution. Family farms and small businesses would not be affected by this provision.

"I represent California's San Joaquin Valley where, unfortunately, poor air quality harms our children and seniors," said Rep. McNerney. "In fact, as many as one in five children in the Valley have been diagnosed with asthma. There is a clear connection between air pollution and respiratory diseases, and the amendment I offered makes sure that we can help seniors and children lead healthy lives."

"My own son and daughter developed asthma when they moved to an area of California's Central Valley with hot temperatures and poor air quality," continued Rep. McNerney. "I know from personal experience how important it is to make sure our kids have fresh, healthy air."

According to the American Lung Association, asthma affects more than seven million children, and more than four million of those children suffered an asthma attack in the year 2009. Asthma also causes approximately 14 million missed school days annually.

Unfortunately, Rep. McNerney's second amendment was defeated by a vote of 251-175.